

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
March 19 & 20, 2003**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., on March 19, 2003, in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

Commissioners present were: Aubrey Davis, Chair, Ed Barnes, Elmira Forner, George Kargianis, A. Michèle Maher, Chris Marr and Connie Niva.

**THURSTON REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL "LOCAL MEETING"**

Virgil Clarkson, Deputy Mayor, City of Lacey and Chair of Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC), introduced Graeme Sackrison, Mayor, City of Lacey, Lon Wyrick, Executive Director, TRPC and Thera Black, Senior Planner, TRPC.. Mr. Clarkston provided an overview of TRPC's mission as an RTPO/MPO and the accomplishments of the regional partnership. He explained that TRPC is the Regional Transportation Planning Organization and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Thurston County. The Council develops regional plans and policies for transportation, growth management, environmental quality and other topics of interest for the residents of Thurston County.

Mr. Wyrick, stated that TRPC has been an effective RTPO/MPO due to its emphasis on regional partnerships. He provided examples that rely on effective partnerships and expressed that TRPC is focusing on relationships between transportation goals and land use in Thurston County. It is supportive of fundamental goals of the Growth Management Act and transportation investment decisions. Mr. Wyrick briefed the Commission regarding projects that the Council is currently focusing on. Graeme Sackrison, Mayor, City of Lacey, and TRPC member representing Intercity Transit stated that he would like to focus on partnerships between Thurston County's three major communities; Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater. He explained that the TRPC and Intercity Transit work together in building the foundation for the regional transportation plan. He stated that it is crucial that a broad coalition of the community work together. Thera Black, Senior Planner, TRPC, discussed the Council's transportation planning and land use decision-making process. She played a video for the Commissioners that provided information regarding unprotected forestlands in Southern Thurston County that are being consumed by urban growth. Growth areas and zoning regulations have become a major concern. She concluded her presentation stating that the TRPC is developing a diverse workgroup to bring together the finance and development community, both the commercial and residential side of the table, as partners to determine the needs and to work toward accomplishments.

Commissioner's provided comments regarding TRPC projects, Intercity Transit and para-transit services. Commissioners and Councilmembers shared a question and answer period where Commissioner's provided input and asked questions regarding the economic future and development of Thurston County. Chair Davis and Commissioners thanked Councilmembers for their presentation.

## **OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY REPORT**

Secretary MacDonald, congratulated Kim Willoughby, WSDOT Pavement Structures Engineer and co-author Linda Pierce, WSDOT State Pavement Engineer, winners of the KB Woods Award, for authoring "Online Tools for Hot Mix Monitoring". Ms. Willoughby explained that the paper was written in collaboration with the University of Washington and Auburn University. The paper is used as a tool to describe temperature differential performance of hot mix concrete during and after construction to obtain longer life cycle of pavement. Commissioner's asked questions concerning the implementation and effectiveness of this improved method. Secretary MacDonald briefed the Commission regarding avalanche control, plowing and sanding of mountain highway passes in Washington State. He explained that avalanche control is an intentional explosive triggering of snow slides by the Department to minimize the chance of natural avalanches into traffic. He moved on to discuss the results of FFY 2003 - Final Discretionary Earmarks describing the federal and state matching funding process explaining how much the process matters to communities regarding preservation, highway revitalization, and safety projects throughout Washington State. Commissioners and Secretary MacDonald discussed funding appropriations. Paula Hammond, Chief of Staff, briefed the Commission regarding the 2001-2003 Biennium Reappropriation Request. Commissioners were provided a handout that illustrated how funding may be reappropriated as a result of projects that were not completed within the biennium for multiple reasons. Rick Smith, Director, Planning and Capital Program Management, explained how the Department manages project funding and the reasons why project funding may be reappropriated. Commissioner's reviewed the handout and suggested rewording of the explanation column of the handout on two of the projects. Secretary MacDonald indicated that the Department is actively involved in inspection of facilities and structures on the state's highway system as a result the Governor issuing an "orange alert".

## **2003 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE**

Don Griffith, Legislative Liaison, provided an update of transportation related legislative activities. Mr. Griffith stated that a priority is accountability and is under consideration before moving on to governance, efficiencies, budget and funding and revenue forecasting. Commissioner's Maher and Niva expressed concern regarding the language in SSB 5457, Posting hazards to motorcycles. Mr. Griffith stated that Department staff testified to address concerns regarding the language in SSB 5427. Commissioner Maher questioned the language in SB5367, Apportioning railroad crossing installation and maintenance costs. She asked if the railroads had approved of the language that states 10 percent would go to railroad companies. Mr. Griffith stated that he would obtain an answer for her. Bill Ford, Budget Chief, briefed the Commission regarding budget legislation. He distributed a handout that covered the Governor's 2003-2005 Capital Budget, Operating Budget and Omnibus Supplemental Operating Budget.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*It was moved by Commissioner Marr and seconded by Commissioner Kargianis to approve the minutes of the February 19 & 20, 2003 Commission meeting as amended to include Commissioner Barnes as a yes vote to approve Resolution 645 as amended. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **PUBLIC AND LEGISLATOR COMMENT PERIOD**

There were no public or legislators present that wished to address the Commission.

## **110 YEARS OF TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH**

Leni Oman, Manager, Transportation Research Office, provided an overview of how the Department facilitates the development and implementation of research. The Research Office coordinates the process for identifying, selecting, and managing research projects. Each project is assigned a technical monitor linked with a research project manager to document research results, develop implementation plans, and document implementation experiences that are provided to the Department with oversight by the Research Executive Committee. Most projects are performed under contract with the University of Washington and Washington State University through the Washington Transportation Center (TRAC). TRAC provides a link among government, university researchers, and the private sector. Most of the Department's research projects are contracted through TRAC which acts as a liaison, connecting those who need applied research at the Department with those best suited to conduct it at the universities. Research results have greatly improved the longevity of pavements, the safety of road design, improved speed and safety of construction methods along with many other benefits. WSDOT staff has helped national research efforts produce results that are useful to Washington State. Understanding the research needs of the agency provides improved opportunity for partnering with others either through using recent research results developed by others, partnering on funding, providing customer input to research panels, or submitting proposals. The Research Office will be working with customers to develop lists of current research needs to better facilitate these partnerships. Commissioner Forner asked about research regarding submerged tunnels. Secretary MacDonald stated that he would provide her with the information that she requested. Commissioners and Department staff shared a brief question and answer period regarding dowel bar retrofits, salt deicers, and other research related activities. Secretary MacDonald explained research funding, stating that two percent of the major federal appropriation is dedicated to State Planning and Research (SPR), five and one half percent of Department's total SPR funds go to the National Cooperative Highway Research Program. Pooled Fund Obligations are deducted from the research funds. Twenty Five percent, less the NCHRP payment and Pooled Fund Projects, pays for WSDOT research projects. John Conrad, Assistant Secretary, Engineering and Regional Operations, stated that candidate projects are reviewed, analyzed and compiled into a report and submitted to the AASHTO Standing Committee on Research. The Committee selects projects that will receive funding. Commissioner Marr asked if any of the university or Department research has generated any patents. Secretary MacDonald responded that the Department does have a trademark on CVIP. Commissioner Forner asked that a breakdown of where the planning and research funds go, be provided to the Commission at the

May meeting. She asked if RTPOs could request grant money from the total SPR. Secretary MacDonald stated that yes the fund is used for planning and research.

## **STRATEGIC FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS**

John Doyle, Director, Freight Strategy and Policy, introduced Eric Jessup, Project Manager, Strategic Freight Transportation (SFTA), and assistant professor at Washington State University; and Ken Casavant, who is the principal investigator on the SFTA project, and a professor at Washington State University; and Jerry Lenzi, Eastern Region Administrator and chair of the SFTA Steering Committee. Mr. Casavant explained that SFTA is a six-year comprehensive research and implementation analysis that will provide information (data and direction) for local, state and national investments and decisions designed to achieve the goal of seamless transportation. The desired outcome of SFTA is improved freight mobility for economic vitality. To achieve this SFTA, will work with its collaborative partnerships and integrated dynamic freight data to aid in strategic infrastructure investment choices, including transportation support for economic development, responding to freight congestion and chokepoint locations, and other emergent issues. SFTA's tasks are statewide freight origin (destination study), strategic resource road network, short line railroad issues and analysis and adaptive research management. Mr. Casavant shared questions and comments with Commissioners regarding data and freight movement. Mr. Jessup briefed the Commission on the types of analysis and data that are available from the completed Origin and Destination Assessment. He provided samples of SFTA data requests at the federal, local, state, and international level that give a sense of where the information is used and applied in Washington State and across the country.

## **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

Commissioner Barnes reported that he attended a ferry tariff public meeting to discuss ferry tariffs and route alterations. He also attended a bicycle/pedestrian safety meeting, and the construction opening for the Lewis and Clark Bridge. He also attended a meeting with the Port of Vancouver and the local business community regarding transportation issues. He also acknowledged that Commissioner's review and value the information that is provided in the focus report prepared by Paula Hammond, Chief of Staff.

Commissioner Maher reported that she attended several ferry tariff public meetings and found the meetings to be very beneficial.

Commissioner Forner commented about her recent out of state trip Mexico and Arizona. She reflected on the economic development of communities that she had passed through, and expressed that the growth is as a result of improved transportation.

Commissioner Marr provided an update regarding his involvement with the bi-state freight mobility project. He stated that he will be meeting with rail agency members in Washington D.C.

Commissioner Niva stated that the City of Seattle, as representatives of Sound Transit, has concern regarding the regional bus systems and the Department's HOV policies. She stated that the

Department and Sound Transit are working together to find resolution to the HOV policy issue.

Commissioner Kargianis reported regarding RTID project funding.

Chair Davis reported that he has visited with legislators several times to discuss the role of the Commission and pending legislation.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 5 p.m., on March 19, 2003.

**King County Courthouse  
9th Floor, Room E-942, 516 3rd Avenue  
Seattle, Washington**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was reconvened and called to order at 8:30 a.m., on March 20, 2003, at the King County Courthouse, 9th Floor, Room E-942 - 516 3rd Avenue, Seattle, Washington

Commissioners present were: Aubrey Davis, Chair, Ed Barnes, Elmira Forner, George Kargianis, A. Michèle Maher, Chris Marr and Connie Niva.

**URBAN CORRIDORS UPDATE**

David Dye, Urban Corridors Administrator, introduced Lloyd Flem, Executive Director, Washington Association of Rail Passengers and Anthony Trifiletti, President, Washington Association of Rail Passengers, and J. Craig Thorp, Washington Association of Rail Passengers, explained the Cascade Foothills Corridor that is a commerce corridor. He stated that the Legislative Transportation Committee formed a sub-committee in 2002 to investigate the potential feasibility of a new north/south corridor from Lewis County to the Canadian border. The Department, along with other parties, prepared and presented background information to that Committee last fall. Mr. Thorp, illustrated a presentation of the Cascade Foothills Corridor. The Cascade Foothills Corridor (CFC) is 235 miles long starting at Mission, British Columbia and extending to Tenino, Washington. The CFC would contain a freight rail line, electric transmission lines and pipelines for natural gas, petroleum products and water. The CFC would be built on abandoned rail alignments and rebuilt existing rail rights of way. It is assumed that the CFC would have direct connections to other rail trunk lines and major terminals along or near its route, such as Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. The CFC rail line should be electrified. This power source would potentially increase traffic mobility and virtually eliminate all air and water pollution. Innovative financing and public-private partnerships would move Washington away from the traditional practice of using tax money to pay for new and improved public roads and other infrastructure. The CFC would help maintain Washington's competitive role in retaining industry, economic development and maintain a healthy environment for the future. Commissioners asked questions regarding the impact of the CFC project on freight movement by rail, and Amtrak services from the Canadian border to Mexico.

Bruce Agnew, Cascadia Project Director, briefed the Commission regarding the Cascade

Multi-Modal Corridor. In 2002 the federal transportation appropriations bill, the International Mobility and Trade Corridor (IMTC) project led by the Whatcom Council of Governments received a \$2.5 million earmark for the "Cascadia Northern Border" projects. In 2002 the project was outlined before the Legislative Transportation Committee. The Cascadia Discovery Institute advocates alternative trade corridors between Canada and the United States in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains and along highways in Eastern and Central Washington (SR 395 and 97) to facilitate trade, provide redundancy to I-5 and benefit the rural communities they pass through both economically and environmentally. The initial scope of work will include an energy and utility market analysis of West Coast, projected demand and supply needs and transmission systems. Utilities would include telecommunications, natural gas and liquid petroleum pipelines, and electrical grids. The project will also examine the legal, financial and regulatory issues involved in a potential public/private, bi-national partnership for the corridor. The Cascadia Project has received a grant to examine the feasibility of a West Coast Compact or coalition of class one railroads, state transportation departments, ports, shippers, carriers and Amtrak to expand freight, intercity passenger and commuter rail along the West Coast.

David Dye, updated the Commission regarding the Cascade Foothills (Commerce) Corridor findings and conclusions. The issues and challenges of defining the right projects are, quantifying the project benefits and identifying and mitigating environmental impacts, gaining public acceptance and finding the funding. There are several roadway alignment options possible and several combinations of project elements. One example would be potential rail, pipeline, utility, and highway corridor, but could require 500 plus feet of right-of-way width. Mr. Dye provided an update regarding the Sound Transit projects in Bellevue. The Department is providing engineering services for Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue for three projects that form Access Downtown.

### **WASHINGTON STATE FERRIES FARE HEARING**

Ray Deardorf, Planning Director, Washington State Ferries, started the WSF Tariff and Preferential Loading hearing stating that the Commission will be required to take formal action to adopt proposed changes and potential modifications for WAC 468-300-010; 040; 220 and 700. The Tariff Policy Committee has recommended amendments to the original proposal. Alice Tawresey, Chair, Tariff Policy Committee (TCP), briefed the Commission on the changes to the original proposal. She presented the principal elements of the TCP recommended tariff 2003 Proposal Summary. The summary includes: A five percent fare increase plus Phase III of Tariff Route Equity; reduce passenger coupon discount from twenty five percent to twenty percent, extend youth discount for thirty percent to twenty percent, extend Tariff Route Equity logic to the San Juan Interisland fares and fares for oversize vehicles and eliminate the commercial stopover fee, replace commercial frequent user discount with a program of flexible negotiated discounts, refine day-of-week pricing in the San Juan Islands by reducing the early week discount and increasing the coupon book discounts, and align over-wide vehicle and alternative vehicle definitions with other state regulations. This proposal is estimated to generate \$4.1 million in new fare revenue in fiscal year 2004. The TCP's second year proposal recommends a five percent general fare increase, Phase IV of Tariff Route Equity (TRE) through 2009. Mr. Deardorf, stated that public involvement included brochure distribution, WSF website tariff proposal link, information agents and ticket sellers provided materials to the public, mailing inserts, media information and eight public hearing in ferry communities. He commented that the public's most frequent concern was the belief that the

fare increases have been too high and are forcing people off the WSF and onto the region's already crowded highway system. Other comments suggested that WSF should improve efficiencies and generate more non-fare revenue. There was some support for the overall proposal and the need for fare increases. A number of comments were oriented to various options to shift the burden among different users. Customers suggested a number of new or alternative approaches to setting fares that the TPC will consider in subsequent tariff review cycles. Ms. Tawresey, addressed proposed amendments regarding commercial users concerns stating that the proposal would mitigate the cost impact of eliminating the stopover fee and; would not unfairly penalize westbound stopover trips. This amendment will have a minimal impact on fare revenues. Commercial account customers would have more time to transition from the current commercial discount program to the new program of negotiated discounts. To simplify the administration and collection of commercial reservation fees, the TPC recommends amending the proposed fee structure. The amendment would produce marginally less revenue, but would be much easier to communicate and administer. The 2004 amended proposal would eliminate the commercial frequent user discount. Chair Davis reported that the Commission has reviewed public comments that have been received during the process. Commissioner Niva commended Commissioners for attending all of the public hearings. Bob Distler, Chair, Executive Ferry Advisory Committee, stated that the position of the TPC has severely affected the San Juan Islands, but that the TPC's proposal is fair and reasonable, and urges the Commission to adopt the proposal. Ed Sutton, commercial representative, Tariff Policy Committee, stated that he has met with truckers and commercial companies to try and assist them with understanding tariffs. Ms. Tawresey thanked the Commission for their trust in the TPC. Commissioner Niva commended the TPC for their review and amendments to the proposal. Commissioner Kargianis asked if it is the public's perception that it is being asked to bear a percentage of operational costs. Ms. Tawresey responded, no she does not think so, that the public does not have an adequate understanding capital outlay for ferries. Senator Oke responded to Commissioner Kariganis' question stating that the difference is regarding expense, he compared state highways versus ferries expenses.

### **WSF FARE HEARING PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Bill Wright, resident, Friday Harbor, expressed specific concerns regarding farebox recovery. He feels that the Commission should regulate farebox fares and not the Tariff Policy Committee (TPC). He contends that the TPC has no charter, process, does not keep minutes (keeps a summary), and votes without a quorum. He feels that the ferry system is not treated like an extension of the highway system in the way it is funded. He feels that the CR 102 form that was filed should be amended. Mr. Wright pointed out that he feels the Commission should wait until the Legislature determines what funding will be before fares are increased. Commissioners provided comments regarding Mr. Wright's suggestions and concerns.

Dwight Lewis, resident, Lopez Island, stated that he operates a trucking company and utilizes the interisland routes. He expressed his concerns regarding Tariff Route Equity (TRE), ferry fares, oversize vehicle discounts and surcharges. Alice Tawresey, Chair, TPC, commented that the TPC would like to address discounts, congestion pricing and automated ticketing.

Ray Deardorf, Planning Director, WSF, stated that the revised Tariff Policy Proposal addresses a number of Mr. Lewis' issues.

Ed Sutton, commented regarding TRE stating that the concept of a tariff as a function of distance became a very important consideration. He stated that he favors the TRE concept although it needs more structuring.

Chair Davis requested that the TPC look into what needs to be done to review TRE. He also requested that the TPC address the issue of having more formality in its processes.

Senator Bob Oke commented that there is a wide disparity between the cost of service and value of service within the ferry service.

Ellen White, WSF, commented regarding over-height safety factors regarding antennas on vehicles. She requested that an exception be made regarding fares associated with the height of antennas.

Kelly Wright, resident, Marysville, spoke in defense of the Legislature stating that it is the Legislature's prerogative to make the decisions regarding funding and that fares should not be set until the Legislature as approved a funding package. Commissioner Forner responded that the Commission keeps the Legislature informed and acts as an advocate for transportation needs. Secretary MacDonald commented that the Department, Commission and Legislature exchange information regarding services and the transportation budget.

Patricia McCay, resident, Friday Harbor, stated that she is newly appointed to San Juan County Ferry Advisory Committee. She commended WSF and the Commission for their participation with the public.

***Commissioner Niva moved and Commissioner Kargianis seconded approval of WSF Tariff and Preferential Loading Proposal as amended. The motion was approved unanimously.***

The Commission meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m., on March 20, 2003.